3:Drapkin D-5 (1934-1935) 1935
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2

[177] 212 Provincial Director of Public Instruction, Valparaiso. It is entirely due to these circumstances that there is a large number of illiterates among the Easter Islanders, in spite of their remarkable intelligence and their extremely keen desire for education.

153 Easter Islanders, in the manner of most of the Polynesians, are of an open, observing nature, having extraordinary faculties for [177] assimilation. They are constantly on the watch for every new bit of knoweldge and adopt with a veritable passion every innovation, material or intellectual. Individuals of exceptional talent should have special advantages. Their present condition does not favor them at all in this respect.

191 177 [648] Because Easter Island belongs to Chile, the official language is Spanish, naturally. Up to the present the Chilean influence consists only of the presence of a Commissioner whose functions include those of Civil Registration Officer and Schoolmaster. Therefore it is not surprising that most of the natives, if they understand Spanish, do not speak it except very badly. Only a small group of individuals are capable of more or less correct expression in this language. The women are even more conservative in their language and traditions; there are few who can carry on a conversation in Spanish.

212 We shall consider as illiterate all natives who do not read or write any language, for quite a number among them read and write the Easter Island language or Tahitian. Without counting the children under 10, of whom there are 183, there are actually 147 illiterates, that is to say 53.85 percent. One hundred and twenty-six, or 46.15 percent, read and write.

VITAL STATISTICS

114 163 165 It would be necessary, in order to complete this brief contribution to the demography of Easter Island, to give statistics for births, mortality, marriage, sanitary conditions, etc. Unfortunately, various circumstances have made this task impossible. The bureau of civil registry, installed at Hanga Roa in 1915, has been neglected. Also no official census of the population has been made until now. In addition, the island is without doctors who could have studied the sanitary conditions and the causes of death. To complete the difficulty, one series of the records of the civil registry has disappeared.

15:Routledge E-5 (1914-1915) 1919
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2

any doubt being thrown on his story, which would at once have given offence; then allowed to forget and again re-examined, his story being compared with that of others who had been heard meanwhile. Counsel had also to be judge and to act as reporter, and at the same time keep the witness amused and prevent the interpreter from being bored, or the court would promptly have broken up. Though great care has been exercised, it must be remembered, when a particular account is quoted, as, for example, that of Te Haha regarding the annual inspection of the tablets, while it is believed to rest on fact, its absolute accuracy cannot be guaranteed. 124

The language question naturally added to the difficulty. On landing two courses had been open, either to go on with Spanish, of which the younger men had a certain knowledge, and which was used by Mr. Edmunds, or to try to get some hold of the native tongue. The latter plan was decided on, and though at one time the difficulties seemed so great that this course was almost regretted, in the end it was vindicated. There is, as stated, a vocabulary in French made by the missionaries, and also one in Spanish, but there is no grammar of any kind. The French carpenter, Varta, was some assistance, particularly at the beginning. The first steps were the easiest. The Kanakas were much interested in my endeavours, and rushed round wildly, bringing any object they could lay hands on in order to teach its name; but even with the nouns an unexpected complication arose. The natives speak, not only their own language, but, side by side with it, that of Tahiti, which is used in their religious books and services; there are affinities between the two, but they are quite dissimilar, and to understand conversation it was necessary to learn both. This very much prolonged the task, and also lessened the results obtained. [114] [191]

The next stage, the putting together of sentences, was still more difficult. How was it possible to talk in a language which had no verb "to be"? I had, it is true, a native maid (fig. 29), but, after the simplest phrases had been learnt, topics for conversation were difficult to find. We looked through illustrated magazines together, but wild beasts, railway trains, and the greater part of the pictures of all kinds, conveyed nothing to her. The plan was therefore hit on of a tale, after the manner of the *Arabian Nights*, dealing with imaginary